

Joshua 21 - Cities of the Levites; Complete vs Incomplete Conquest

II. Division of Canaan (Joshua 13:1—21:45)

(4) Important cities (Joshua 20:1—21:42)

(B) Levitical cities (21:1-42)

(5) Conclusion (21:43-45)

Joshua 21

(B) Levitical cities (21:1-42)

1 Then the heads of fathers' *households* of the Levites approached Eleazar the priest, Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of fathers' *households* of the tribes of the sons of Israel.

1 Then the heads of households of the Levites approached Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of households of the tribes of the sons of Israel.

1 Then the family leaders of the descendants of Levi approached Eleazar the priest and Nun's son Joshua, along with the family leaders of the people of Israel.

1 Then came near the heads of the fathers of the Levites unto Eleazar the priest, and unto Joshua the son of Nun, and unto the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel;

2 And they spoke to them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, saying, "The LORD commanded through Moses to give us cities to live in, with their pasture lands for our cattle."

2 They spoke to them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, saying, "The LORD commanded through Moses to give us cities to live in, with their pasture lands for our cattle."

2 It was at Shiloh in the land of Canaan that they told them, "The LORD ordered through Moses that we be given cities in which to live, along with their pasture lands for our livestock."

2 And they spake unto them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, saying, The LORD commanded by the hand of Moses to give us cities to dwell in, with the suburbs thereof for our cattle.

3 So the sons of Israel gave the Levites from their inheritance these cities with their pasture lands, in accordance with the command of the LORD.

3 So the sons of Israel gave the Levites from their inheritance these cities with their pasture lands, according to the command of the LORD.

3 So, just as the LORD had said, the Israelites set aside cities for the descendants of Levi from a portion of their own inheritances, along with their grazing lands.

3 And the children of Israel gave unto the Levites out of their inheritance, at the commandment of the LORD, these cities and their suburbs.

4 Then the lot came out for the families of the Kohathites. And to the sons of Aaron the priest, who were of the Levites, thirteen cities were *given* by lot from the tribe of Judah, from the tribe of the Simeonites, and from the tribe of Benjamin.

4 Then the lot came out for the families of the Kohathites. And the sons of Aaron the priest, who were of the Levites, received thirteen cities by lot from the tribe of Judah and from the tribe of the Simeonites and from the tribe of Benjamin.

4 The lottery went to the families of the descendants of Kohath. So the descendants of Aaron the priest, who were descendants of Levi, received thirteen cities by random lot from the tribes of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin.

4 And the lot came out for the families of the Kohathites: and the children of Aaron the priest, which were of the Levites, had by lot out of the tribe of Judah, and out of the tribe of Simeon, and out of the tribe of Benjamin, thirteen cities.

- Probably Joshua, Eleazar, and the tribal clan leaders identified the 42 towns first, and then assigned the four clan groups of Levites to particular cities by lot (v3-4)

— The priests, or Aaronic “Kohathites” (Aaron’s descendants), received 13 cities within the tribal territories of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin

5 And to the rest of the sons of Kohath ten cities *were given* by lot from the families of the tribe of Ephraim, from the tribe of Dan, and from the half-tribe of Manasseh.

5 The rest of the sons of Kohath received ten cities by lot from the families of the tribe of Ephraim and from the tribe of Dan and from the half-tribe of Manasseh.

5 The rest of the descendants of Kohath received ten cities by random lot from the families of the tribes of Ephraim, Dan, and the half-tribe of Manasseh.

5 And the rest of the children of Kohath had by lot out of the families of the tribe of Ephraim, and out of the tribe of Dan, and out of the half tribe of Manasseh, ten cities.

- The rest of the Kohathites—Aaron was a descendant of Kohath—obtained 10 cities in Ephraim, Dan, and western Manasseh

For Christians, the allotment of Levitical towns from each tribe illustrates the principle of returning to God a portion of what has been given to them. These gifts are then used to support others in need and to encourage the proclamation of the faith (Cf. Acts 2:44-47; Rom 15:26-27; Phil 4:10-18).

6 And to the sons of Gershon thirteen cities *were given* by lot from the families of the tribe of Issachar, from the tribe of Asher, from the tribe of Naphtali, and from the half-tribe of Manasseh in Bashan.

6 The sons of Gershon received thirteen cities by lot from the families of the tribe of Issachar and from the tribe of Asher and from the tribe of Naphtali and from the half-tribe of Manasseh in Bashan.

6 The descendants of Gershon received thirteen cities by random lot from the families of the tribes of Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and from the half-tribe of Manasseh located in Bashan.

6 And the children of Gershon had by lot out of the families of the tribe of Issachar, and out of the tribe of Asher, and out of the tribe of Naphtali, and out of the half tribe of Manasseh in Bashan, thirteen cities.

- The Gershonites received 13 cities in Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and eastern Manasseh

7 To the sons of Merari according to their families twelve cities *were given* from the tribe of Reuben, from the tribe of Gad, and from the tribe of Zebulun.

7 The sons of Merari according to their families received twelve cities from the tribe of Reuben and from the tribe of Gad and from the tribe of Zebulun.

7 The descendants of Merari, allocated according to their families, received twelve cities from the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Zebulun.

7 The children of Merari by their families had out of the tribe of Reuben, and out of the tribe of Gad, and out of the tribe of Zebulun, twelve cities.

- The Merarites inherited 12 cities in Reuben, Gad, and Zebulun

8 Now the sons of Israel gave by lot to the Levites these cities with their pasture lands, as the LORD had commanded through Moses.

8 Now the sons of Israel gave by lot to the Levites these cities with their pasture lands, as the LORD had commanded through Moses.

8 The Israelis apportioned these cities, along with their pasture lands, to the descendants of Levi by random lot, just as the LORD had commanded through Moses.

8 And the children of Israel gave by lot unto the Levites these cities with their suburbs, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses.

9 They gave these cities which are mentioned *here* by name from the tribe of the sons of Judah and from the tribe of the sons of Simeon;

9 They gave these cities which are *here* mentioned by name from the tribe of the sons of Judah and from the tribe of the sons of Simeon;

9 From the tribes of the descendants of Judah and Simeon, they gave these cities, delineated by name:

9 And they gave out of the tribe of the children of Judah, and out of the tribe of the children of Simeon, these cities which are here mentioned by name.

- The names of the Levitical towns appear in v9-40...

- In all, the Levites received 48 cities with their surrounding pasturelands, including the six cities of refuge (v41-42)

— God arranged the distribution of the 48 Levitical towns in such a way that the Levites, whose responsibilities included the teaching and counseling of the other Israelites in the Law, were not far from anyone in Israel

— They needed to be able to provide a positive spiritual influence on the whole nation, and thereby fulfill their divine function

10 and they were for the sons of Aaron, one of the families of the Kohathites, of the sons of Levi, because the lot was theirs first.

10 and they were for the sons of Aaron, one of the families of the Kohathites, of the sons of Levi, for the lot was theirs first.

10 for the descendants of Aaron, one of the families of the descendants of Kohath, of the descendants of Levi, since the lot fell in their favor first.

10 Which the children of Aaron, being of the families of the Kohathites, who were of the children of Levi, had: for theirs was the first lot.

11 So they gave them Kiriath-arba (*Arba being* the father of Anak), that is, Hebron, in the hill country of Judah, with its surrounding pasture lands.

11 Thus they gave them Kiriath-arba, *Arba being* the father of Anak (that is, Hebron), in the hill country of Judah, with its surrounding pasture lands.

11 They gave them Kiriath-arba, also known as Hebron, (Arba was named after the ancestor of Anak), in the hill country of Judah, along with its surrounding pasture lands.

11 And they gave them the city of Arba the father of Anak, which city is Hebron, in the hill country of Judah, with the suburbs thereof round about it.

12 But the fields of the city and its villages they gave to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as his possession.

12 But the fields of the city and its villages they gave to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as his possession.

12 But the fields adjoining the city and its surrounding villages were given to Jephunneh's son Caleb.

12 But the fields of the city, and the villages thereof, gave they to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for his possession.

13 So to the sons of Aaron the priest they gave Hebron, the city of refuge for the one who commits manslaughter, with its pasture lands, Libnah with its pasture lands,

13 So to the sons of Aaron the priest they gave Hebron, the city of refuge for the manslayer, with its pasture lands, and Libnah with its pasture lands,

13 So they gave Hebron to the descendants of Aaron the priest to serve as a city of refuge for unintentional killers, along with its pasture lands, Libnah with its pasture lands,

13 Thus they gave to the children of Aaron the priest Hebron with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer; and Libnah with her suburbs,

14 Jattir with its pasture lands, Eshtemoa with its pasture lands,

14 and Jattir with its pasture lands and Eshtemoa with its pasture lands,

14 Jattir with its pasture lands, Eshtemoa with its pasture lands,

14 And Jattir with her suburbs, and Eshtemoa with her suburbs,

15 Holon with its pasture lands, Debir with its pasture lands,

15 and Holon with its pasture lands and Debir with its pasture lands,

15 Holon with its pasture lands, Debir with its pasture lands,

15 And Holon with her suburbs, and Debir with her suburbs,

16 Ain with its pasture lands, Juttah with its pasture lands, *and* Beth-shemesh with its pasture lands; nine cities from these two tribes.

16 and Ain with its pasture lands and Juttah with its pasture lands *and* Beth-shemesh with its pasture lands; nine cities from these two tribes.

16 Ain with its pasture lands, Juttah with its pasture lands, and Beth-shemesh with its pasture lands, for a total of nine cities from these two tribes.

16 And Ain with her suburbs, and Juttah with her suburbs, and Bethshemesh with her suburbs; nine cities out of those two tribes.

17 From the tribe of Benjamin, Gibeon with its pasture lands, Geba with its pasture lands,

17 From the tribe of Benjamin, Gibeon with its pasture lands, Geba with its pasture lands,

17 From the tribe of Benjamin, Gibeon with its pasture lands, Geba with its pasture lands,

17 And out of the tribe of Benjamin, Gibeon with her suburbs, Geba with her suburbs,

18 Anathoth with its pasture lands, and Almon with its pasture lands; four cities.

18 Anathoth with its pasture lands and Almon with its pasture lands; four cities.

18 Anathoth with its pasture lands, and Almon with its pasture lands, for a total of four cities.

18 Anathoth with her suburbs, and Almon with her suburbs; four cities.

19 All the cities of the sons of Aaron, the priests, were thirteen cities with their pasture lands.

19 All the cities of the sons of Aaron, the priests, were thirteen cities with their pasture lands.

19 All of the cities allocated to the priests, who were descendants of Aaron, numbered thirteen, along with their pasture lands.

19 All the cities of the children of Aaron, the priests, were thirteen cities with their suburbs.

20 Then the cities from the tribe of Ephraim were allotted to the families of the sons of Kohath, the Levites, *that is*, to the rest of the sons of Kohath.

20 Then the cities from the tribe of Ephraim were allotted to the families of the sons of Kohath, the Levites, *even to* the rest of the sons of Kohath.

20 Cities from the tribe of Ephraim were also allotted to the families of the descendants of Kohath, that is, to the rest of the descendants of Kohath, who were descendants of Levi.

20 And the families of the children of Kohath, the Levites which remained of the children of Kohath, even they had the cities of their lot out of the tribe of Ephraim.

21 They gave them Shechem, the city of refuge for the one who commits manslaughter, with its pasture lands, in the hill country of Ephraim, and Gezer with its pasture lands,

21 They gave them Shechem, the city of refuge for the manslayer, with its pasture lands, in the hill country of Ephraim, and Gezer with its pasture lands,

21 Shechem was allocated to them as a city of refuge for unintentional killers, along with its pasture lands, in the mountainous region of Ephraim, Gezer with its pasture lands,

21 For they gave them Shechem with her suburbs in mount Ephraim, to be a city of refuge for the slayer; and Gezer with her suburbs,

22 and Kibzaim with its pasture lands, and Beth-horon with its pasture lands; four cities.

22 and Kibzaim with its pasture lands and Beth-horon with its pasture lands; four cities.

22 Kibzaim with its pasture lands, and Beth-horon with its pasture lands, for a total of four cities.

22 And Kibzaim with her suburbs, and Bethhoron with her suburbs; four cities.

23 And from the tribe of Dan, Elteke with its pasture lands, Gibbethon with its pasture lands,

23 From the tribe of Dan, Elteke with its pasture lands, Gibbethon with its pasture lands,
23 From the tribe of Dan were allocated⁴ Elteke with its pasture lands, Gibbethon with its pasture lands,

23 And out of the tribe of Dan, Eltekeh with her suburbs, Gibbethon with her suburbs,

24 Aijalon with its pasture lands, Gath-rimmon with its pasture lands; four cities.

24 Aijalon with its pasture lands, Gath-rimmon with its pasture lands; four cities.

24 Aijalon with its pasture lands, and Gath-rimmon with its pasture lands, for a total of four cities.

24 Aijalon with her suburbs, Gathrimmon with her suburbs; four cities.

25 From the half-tribe of Manasseh, *they allotted* Taanach with its pasture lands and Gath-rimmon with its pasture lands; two cities.

25 From the half-tribe of Manasseh, *they allotted* Taanach with its pasture lands and Gath-rimmon with its pasture lands; two cities.

25 From the half-tribe of Manasseh were allocated Taanach with its pasture lands and Gath-rimmon with its pasture lands, for a total of two cities.

25 And out of the half tribe of Manasseh, Tanach with her suburbs, and Gathrimmon with her suburbs; two cities.

26 All the cities with their pasture lands for the families of the rest of the sons of Kohath were ten.

26 All the cities with their pasture lands for the families of the rest of the sons of Kohath were ten.

26 All the cities with their pasture lands for the families of the rest of the descendants of Kohath numbered ten.

26 All the cities were ten with their suburbs for the families of the children of Kohath that remained.

27 And to the sons of Gershon, one of the families of the Levites, from the half-tribe of Manasseh, *they gave* Golan in Bashan, the city of refuge for the one who commits manslaughter, with its pasture lands, and Be-eshterah with its pasture lands; two cities.

27 To the sons of Gershon, one of the families of the Levites, from the half-tribe of Manasseh, *they gave* Golan in Bashan, the city of refuge for the manslayer, with its pasture lands, and Be-eshterah with its pasture lands; two cities.

27 To the descendants of Gershon (one of the Levitical families) from the half-tribe of Manasseh were allocated Golan in Bashan as a city of refuge for unintentional killers, along with its pasture lands, and Beeshterah with its pasture lands, for a total of two cities.

27 And unto the children of Gershon, of the families of the Levites, out of the other half tribe of Manasseh they gave Golan in Bashan with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer; and Beeshterah with her suburbs; two cities.

28 And from the tribe of Issachar *they gave* Kishion with its pasture lands, Daberath with its pasture lands,

28 From the tribe of Issachar, *they gave* Kishion with its pasture lands, Daberath with its pasture lands,

28 From the tribe of Issachar were allocated Kishion with its pasture lands, Daberath with its pasture lands,

28 And out of the tribe of Issachar, Kishon with her suburbs, Dabareh with her suburbs,

29 Jarmuth with its pasture lands, *and* En-gannim with its pasture lands; four cities.

29 Jarmuth with its pasture lands, En-gannim with its pasture lands; four cities.

29 Jarmuth with its pasture lands, and En-gannim with its pasture lands, for a total of four cities.

29 Jarmuth with her suburbs, Engannim with her suburbs; four cities.

30 From the tribe of Asher, *they gave* Mishal with its pasture lands, Abdon with its pasture lands,

30 From the tribe of Asher, *they gave* Mishal with its pasture lands, Abdon with its pasture lands,

30 From the tribe of Asher were allocated Mishal with its pasture lands, Abdon with its pasture lands,

30 And out of the tribe of Asher, Mishal with her suburbs, Abdon with her suburbs,

31 Helkath with its pasture lands, and Rehob with its pasture lands; four cities.

31 Helkath with its pasture lands and Rehob with its pasture lands; four cities.

31 Helkath with its pasture lands, and Rehob with its pasture lands, for a total of four cities.

31 Helkath with her suburbs, and Rehob with her suburbs; four cities.

32 And from the tribe of Naphtali, *they gave* Kedesh in Galilee, the city of refuge for the one who commits manslaughter, with its pasture lands, Hammoth-dor with its pasture lands, and Kartan with its pasture lands; three cities.

32 From the tribe of Naphtali, *they gave* Kedesh in Galilee, the city of refuge for the manslayer, with its pasture lands and Hammoth-dor with its pasture lands and Kartan with its pasture lands; three cities.

32 From the tribe of Naphtali, Kedesh in Galilee with its pasture lands were allocated as a city of refuge for the unintentional killer, Hammoth-dor with its pasture lands, and Kartan with its pasture lands, for a total of three cities.

32 And out of the tribe of Naphtali, Kedesh in Galilee with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer; and Hammothdor with her suburbs, and Kartan with her suburbs; three cities.

33 All the cities of the Gershonites according to their families were thirteen cities with their pasture lands.

33 All the cities of the Gershonites according to their families were thirteen cities with their pasture lands.

33 All the cities of the descendants of Gershon according to their families totaled thirteen, including their pasture lands.

33 All the cities of the Gershonites according to their families were thirteen cities with their suburbs.

34 And to the families of the sons of Merari, the rest of the Levites, *they gave* from the tribe of Zebulun, Jokneam with its pasture lands, Kartah with its pasture lands,

34 To the families of the sons of Merari, the rest of the Levites, *they gave* from the tribe of Zebulun, Jokneam with its pasture lands and Kartah with its pasture lands.

34 From the tribe of Zebulun were allocated to the descendants of Merari (that is, the rest of the descendants of Levi) Jokneam with its pasture lands, Kartah with its pasture lands,

34 And unto the families of the children of Merari, the rest of the Levites, out of the tribe of Zebulun, Jokneam with her suburbs, and Kartah with her suburbs,

35 Dimnah with its pasture lands, *and* Nahalal with its pasture lands; four cities.

35 Dimnah with its pasture lands, Nahalal with its pasture lands; four cities.

35 Dimnah with its pasture lands, and Nahalal with its pasture lands, for a total of four cities.

35 Dimnah with her suburbs, Nahalal with her suburbs; four cities.

36 From the tribe of Reuben *they gave* Bezer with its pasture lands, Jahaz with its pasture lands,

36 From the tribe of Reuben, *they gave* Bezer with its pasture lands and Jahaz with its pasture lands,

36 From the tribe of Reuben were allocated Bezer with its pasture lands, Jahaz with its pasture lands,

36 And out of the tribe of Reuben, Bezer with her suburbs, and Jahazah with her suburbs,

37 Kedemoth with its pasture lands, and Mephaath with its pasture lands; four cities.

37 Kedemoth with its pasture lands and Mephaath with its pasture lands; four cities.

37 Kedemoth with its pasture lands, and Mephaath with its pasture lands, for a total of four cities.

37 Kedemoth with her suburbs, and Mephaath with her suburbs; four cities.

38 And from the tribe of Gad, *they gave* Ramoth in Gilead, the city of refuge for the one who commits manslaughter, with its pasture lands, Mahanaim with its pasture lands,

38 From the tribe of Gad, *they gave* Ramoth in Gilead, the city of refuge for the manslayer, with its pasture lands and Mahanaim with its pasture lands,

38 From the tribe of Gad were allocated Ramoth in Gilead with its pasture lands, to serve as a city of refuge for the unintentional killer, Mahanaim with its pasture lands,

38 And out of the tribe of Gad, Ramoth in Gilead with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer; and Mahanaim with her suburbs,

39 Heshbon with its pasture lands, *and* Jazer with its pasture lands; four cities in all.

39 Heshbon with its pasture lands, Jazer with its pasture lands; four cities in all.

39 Heshbon with its pasture lands, and Jazer with its pasture lands, for a total of four cities in all.

39 Heshbon with her suburbs, Jazer with her suburbs; four cities in all.

40 All *these were* the cities of the sons of Merari according to their families, the rest of the families of the Levites; and their lot was twelve cities.

40 All *these were* the cities of the sons of Merari according to their families, the rest of the families of the Levites; and their lot was twelve cities.

40 So the entire allocation to the descendants of Merari (that is, the rest of the families of the descendants of Levi) according to their families totaled twelve cities.

40 So all the cities for the children of Merari by their families, which were remaining of the families of the Levites, were by their lot twelve cities.

41 All the cities of the Levites in the midst of the possession of the sons of Israel were forty-eight cities with their pasture lands.

41 All the cities of the Levites in the midst of the possession of the sons of Israel were forty-eight cities with their pasture lands.

41 All of the cities of the descendants of Levi that had been set apart among the territorial possession of the Israelis totaled 48, along with their pasture lands.

41 All the cities of the Levites within the possession of the children of Israel were forty and eight cities with their suburbs.

42 These cities individually had their surrounding pasture lands; this is how *it was* with all these cities.

42 These cities each had its surrounding pasture lands; thus *it was* with all these cities.

42 These cities were each surrounded by pasture lands, as was the case with all of these cities.

42 These cities were every one with their suburbs round about them: thus were all these cities.

(5) Conclusion (21:43-45)

Complete vs. Incomplete Conquest: Did God Fulfill Every Good Promise to Israel?

At the crux of the Covenant Theology/Dispensationalism debate is the relationship of Israel and the Church. And of that topic, the land promise aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant, repeated frequently throughout the OT, is the crux of the issue for both sides. Covenant Theologians deny that the land promise to Israel is still valid today, and consider 21:43-45 (along with 10:40-43 and 11:16-23) to be their proof texts, showing that God has already fulfilled the land promises of the Abrahamic Covenant, and consequently we should expect no future fulfillment of either the land promise or the nation of Israel. They, along with Preterists, also point to the prosperous portion of Solomon's reign (1 Kings 4:20-21; 8:56) as evidence that the land promises to Israel have already been fulfilled.

However, as shown in notes on 10:40-43 and 11:16-23, there remained, even as of 21:43-45, outside nations living in the Promised Land. In 23:1-5, Joshua tells the assembled leaders that the Lord would push them out before the Israelites in faithfulness to the promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. There are several other reasons this interpretation is suspect:

(1) The extended context of these passages indicate that the land promises were not completely satisfied in the day of Joshua (13:1-7; Judges 1:19,21,27,29,30-36)

(2) The land that Israel attained in the conquest was only a fraction of what was described in the Abrahamic Covenant (1 Kings 4:25)

(3) The land promises could not have been fulfilled in Joshua's day since Israel had not yet conquered Jerusalem (Joshua 15:63). Jerusalem would not be conquered for another 400 years until the Davidic reign (2 Sam 5).

(4) Solomon's reign extended to the border of Egypt (1 Kings 4:21), not the river of Egypt (Gen 15:18).

(5) Solomon's reign was tributary only (1 Kings 4:21)

(6) The Abrahamic Covenant promises that Israel would possess the land *forever* (Gen 17:7-8,13,19).

(7) If the land promises were fulfilled in Joshua's or Solomon's day, why do subsequent prophets treat these promises as if they are yet to be fulfilled (Amos 9:11-15)?

43 So the LORD gave Israel all the land which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and lived in it.

43 So the LORD gave Israel all the land which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they possessed it and lived in it.

43 So the LORD gave all of the land to Israel that he had promised to give their ancestors, and they took possession and settled there in it.

43 And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein.

- On the surface, this verse is the clearest and most straightforward statement of complete conquest; however, it stands in stark contrast to the incomplete conquest in Joshua's farewell speech (Joshua 23:1-5)

Fathers

The main question here is the nature of this promise to Israel's "fathers" (v43). In many passages, when the biblical writers refer to Israel's fathers, the English translations correctly render this as "forefathers." In most cases, the idea of distant ancestors is clear from the context. In other cases, the writer speaks of the immediately preceding generation.

When the writer speaks of the promise to Israel's forefathers, he often spells out that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are implied. However, in some cases, the writer makes the point that the Lord made a promise to the fathers and to the current generation (Ex 13:11). The identity of the ancestors in v43 is suggested by the parallel in v44 where the narrator speaks of the rest promised "to their fathers." Yahweh's promise of rest occurs for the first time in the final form of the Pentateuch to the immediately preceding generation (Cf. Ex 33:14). Therefore, since the fathers of v43 are arguably the same as those of v44, the expression "to their fathers" in v43 at least includes the previous generation.

44 And the LORD **gave them rest** on every side, in accordance with everything that He had sworn to their fathers, and **no one of all their enemies stood before them**; the LORD handed all their enemies over to them.

44 And the LORD gave them rest on every side, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers, and no one of all their enemies stood before them; the LORD gave all their enemies into their hand.

44 The LORD gave them peace all around them, just as he had promised their ancestors. Not one of their enemies was able to oppose them—the LORD placed all of their enemies under their control.

44 And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that he swore unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand.

- "...gave them rest" - with the first stage of the conquest complete, Israel had the rest promised in Ex 33:14 and Deut 12:10, and not one person out of all their enemies successfully opposed Israel's entry into the land.

— Why did the land have rest from war when the peoples of the land still occupied much of the territory promised to Israel? — Often, the term "rest" is used when peace has been achieved, even when there are still enemies left who are not attacking Israel at the time (Cf. 2 Chr 14:6; 15:15; Deut 25:19).

- "...no one of all their enemies stood before them" - this does not necessarily mean that every one of Israel's enemies had been destroyed. This simply refers to the occupants of the land that they conquered by that time, not the entire Promised Land.

— This is a fulfilled prophecy given by God in Joshua 1:5

— This statement is as important for what it says and what it does not say...the story of the conquest does not tell us that all Israel's enemies actively opposed them and were subsequently killed

— While there is no evidence that implies an unequivocally complete conquest, nevertheless the Lord had been faithful to His promises

45 Not one of the good promises which the LORD had made to the house of Israel failed; everything came to pass.

45 Not one of the good promises which the LORD had made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass.

45 Not one of the good promises that the LORD had made to the house of Israel failed—all of them came about.

45 There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.

- God had been faithful to His promises up to this moment

— He promised possession of the land, rest on every side, and victory over enemies; Israel had experienced all of these to some degree

— While God had been faithful to the good promises He made to them seven years earlier (1:1-9), there was still much Promised Land to be possessed (23:4-5)

This passage is a theological conclusion of the entire book up to this point where the writer emphasizes here the completeness of God's action. No matter what the political situation of Israel in a later generation, be it the division of the kingdom, the fall of the northern kingdom, or the destruction of Jerusalem and the Exile, Israel could not blame God. God

had faithfully done for Israel what he promised. Blame belonged on Israel's shoulders, not God's.

While there remained much land to be possessed (13:1) and there were enemies that Israel was not driving out (16:10; 17:12-13). But we must remember that the biblical writer knew of these other factors, and, if he had thought them to be directly contradictory to 21:43-45, he would surely have noticed it (and, presumably addressed the matter). Apparently the biblical writer felt no unbearable rub here...Yahweh had given Israel all the land (v43a)—witness the fact that they possessed and lived in it (v43b). The fact that they might possess still more of it (Cf. Ex 23:30) does not negate this.

In order for the promise *Yahweh* made in Lev 26:40-45 (see notes there) to have been fulfilled by the time 21:45 occurred, the following elements would have to have transpired historically:

- (1) A national confession of the nation's sin and the iniquity of their forefathers (26:40)
- (2) Yahweh acted with hostility to exile the Jewish nation into the land of their enemies (26:41)
- (3) After the national confession of their sin in the exile, Yahweh would remember His covenant with Jacob, Isaac, and Abraham (26:42)
- (4) The land must be abandoned until all its sabbaths be made up (26:43a)
- (5) The Jewish nation must have made amends for iniquity once in exile (26:43b)
- (6) Yahweh must not abhor them nor break His covenant even when the people are in the land of their enemies (26:44)
- (7) He must remember His covenant He made with the nation (26:45)

These are just as much "the good promises of Yahweh" as is anything else promised elsewhere by Yahweh from Gen 3:15 onward. Even more fitting is that these good promises of Yahweh follow the context of Lev 26 which contains multiple references to the land promises. Since none of these promises were fulfilled, we cannot take 21:45 as referring to every promise in regard to the land conquest.